

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. **W**Hether it were the real Samuel, the Devil, or only a Confederate which appear'd to Saul at Endor?

Ans. Not a Confederate, for these Reasons,
1. We must suppose Saul and his Courtiers, as in the case of Pharaoh, Num. 1. Vol. 2. the most stupid of men, to be cheated so egregiously by an old Woman and a Knave behind the Curtain. But Saul appear'd sharp and apprehensive enough in other things, the case of David, &c. And Courtiers are the unfittest men in the World to be imposed on in things of that Nature.

2. Because we must suppose the old Woman and her Son (as some of the Witch-advocates tell us he was, though if true they must have it from the Devil, since neither God nor man say any thing of it) we say, we must suppose them not only foolish, but mad, when the King had before destroy'd all those who practise that Trade, to pretend falsely to it, both she and her Son; and when she knew he was the King, not knowing what Question he'd ask, to foretel him such Ill-fortune; when Cheats, as tis Notoriously known, will tell little or nothing but good, which had it not come to pass, she was to expect the severest Treatment an offended, absolute, conquering Monarch, could inflict upon her.

3. Though they both wou'd, yet they cou'd, not carry on such a Cheat. Can Cheats Prophecy? Can they foretel the exact Event of a Battel; while yet in the dark Womb of future Contingencies, which some, tho' unjustly, deny to God himself? Can they know the Time, the Circumstances, the Slain? To morrow, Thou and thy Sons shall be with me. Tis all the greatest Absurdity imaginable. Nay, supposing for once, the old Crone, and this her new Son, such wonderful Politicians, as to know exactly the State of both Armies; supposing further, that they knew God had rejected Saul; yet from neither of these Circumstances cou'd they so much as rationally Guess, much less so exactly Foretel the Event. For the Armies, they could not be more unequally match'd than they had been formerly, when all but a few hundred ran away before the Battle; when not a Sword with those few left, besides with Saul and Jonathan; when Jonathan and his Armour-bearer alone discomfited the whole Philistian Army. For Saul, though God had indeed rejected him, and an evil Spirit was come upon him; yet he had some success afterwards in his Wars. He was actually present at the Battle when Goliath was killed, at which time Saul and all Israel were fighting against the Philistines, before and pursued 'em after: Besides, 1. Sam. 23.

when the Philistines had invaded the Land, he went against them; and that, not that we read of, with ill success. For, though tis probable enough Gods Sentence against Saul of rending the Kingdom from him, might be commonly known to the People; yet the time when it shoud be executed, is no where reveal'd, nor that he himself shoud come to an untimely end; which seems more particularly a punishment on him for his thus consulting the Witch, as we find expressly, 1 Chron. 10. 13. So Saul died for his Transgression, &c. and also for asking Counsel of one that had a Familiar Spirit.

This to prove, 'twas not a Confederacy: To which if we add, that Saul both saw and heard this Apparition, whatever it was, in the Form of Samuel, nay perceived that it was Samuel, viz. his likeness; we think that first Point, (for which we are most concerned) will be set in as good a Light as can be desired.

For the 2. Whether the real Soul of Samuel, or the Devil in his Shape? This we confess a greater difficulty; Learned Men being extremely divided therein. However, since 'tis necessary we embrace one Opinion, we rather adhere to the latter, that 'twas the Devil, not the real Samuel; and that for this, as appears to us, very cogent Reason. Because it seems very harsh to suppose, either that a wicked Witch shoud have such Power over the Holy Soul of Samuel, then at rest in Abrahams Bosom, as to drag it thence by her accursed Arts; or that God shoud send him from the place of Bliss on so sad an Errand, when the malicious Fiend, the destroying Angel, the Instrument of his Vengeance, the Tempter to Despair and Adversary of mankind was so ready, so proper a Messenger for such a business. The chief Arguments to the contrary are these, 1. The express repeated mention of Samuel through the whole Story. The Woman saw that it was Samuel, Saul perceived it was Samuel, Samuel said unto Saul: Besides the Apparition it self, v. 17. The Lord hath done as he spake by me. Tis acknowledg'd this is a weighty argument, and not easily answer'd. But this may be, we think, fairly said to't: That the Holy Penman here, ties not himself to strict Logical expressions; but describes things as they appear'd, or were taken to be in vulgar acceptation. Many Instances might be given from other places, take one in the very words, Samuel did, Samuel said; Whereas really, in strictness and exact propriety, even granting their Supposition that 'twas Samuel's Soul, it cou'd not however be real Samuel; The Soul being but part of the

the Man, of whose Essence 'tis to be Body as well as Soul. But meerly because here was the likeness of his Body, or a Body of Air (for his own was buried at *Rama*-----Miles from *Endor*) he is called *Samuel*. This being granted, we see no ill consequences in advancing a step further, and asking, Why main't as well the appearance of *Samuel* be call'd *Samuel*, though it was not so, as the Soul of *Samuel* be called by that name, when neither cou'd that properly be said to be *Samuel*? For another Difficulty, the Devil's foretelling future Events, besides his shroud Gueses, It might be reveal'd to him, as we are sure 'twas in the case of *Job*. Thus have we endeavour'd to remove Objections, and shew Reasons why it was neither a Confederate, nor the real *Samuel*, but an illusive *Demon* which appear'd to *Saul* in the Shape, Dress, and form of that Holy Man.

Quest. 2. *Whether an Example without a Precept, be sufficient, for instituting one Ordinance and disannulling another? And whether the Example of the Apostles in meeting the first day of the week be sufficient for changing the Sabbath?*

Ans. The Ordinances or Rites of the Christian Religion, are simple, and not many in number; some of them instituted by Christ, others by the Apostles, though both in a sense *Jure Divino*; some Temporary, others to continue to the end of the World. We think there can be no Instance given of any one Rite or Usage ordained or Instituted, as always and of necessity to be observed in the Church of God, but what has either our Saviours, or the Apostles Precept as well as Example to inforce and recommend it; and that the same is to be said of the *disannulling* any Rite or Usage which before those times obtained in the Church of God. But we also think that there is great difference between a Rite, and what we may call a *mode* of a Rite; and between *disannulling* a thing in particular or general. To explain and apply this to the present Question of the *Change of the Sabbath*; Time is but a *Circumstance* of Worship, as well as Place: It is generally held, and we think by all acknowledged, that *some things* enjoyn'd in the Fourth Commandment, which fixed that time, were only *Judaical* and *Ceremonial*. The *Israelites* were not so much as to *dress* their *Victuals* on that day, but the day before, to *Bake* what they would *Bake*, and *Seeth* what they would *Seeth*. Most Christians further believe, that the appropriation of the *Seventh Day* out of the *Seven*, to be kept *holy*, was only settled in the Church by *Moses*, and think the particular *Seventh day Ceremonial*, though one in *Seven Moral*, for which Divines produce several very probable Texts, in the Old as well as in the new Testament. That among the rest, *Let no Man judge you for Meats or Drinks, or for a New-Moon, or a Sabbath*, (the Old Jewish Sabbath) Day. And if this Hypothesis be true, there is no need of a particular *disannulling* this Rite or Ordinance, as to that very

day, by our Saviour, or his Apostles; since it falls of its own accord, together with the rest of the *Jewish Oeconomy*, which being Typical only, was perfected in our Saviour, and clearly annulled by him and his Apostles. Then for the instituting *anew*, the *First Day* in its room, or rather *changing* it, which as has been said, is but altering the *mode* of an *old Rite*, not properly instituting a *new one*, for which we have both the *Apostles Example* and *Precept*, one of which would hardly be valid, as to a general and perpetual Observation thereof without the other. For their Example of meeting on the *First day*, meeting frequently on that Day, and meeting for the celebration of *Religious Assemblies*, the *Sabbatarians* will not deny it; but they deny any such *Precept* by them delivered to the *Church of God*. This we prove, both by the Records of the first Church Historians, and from the Universal Tradition of the Church in all Places and Ages. They disallow this way of Proof, tell us they have no usages in their Churches, but what are plain in Scripture, and omit none that are so. In Answer, neither does the last hold; for though they use *Unction* for the Sick, and perhaps the *agape* too, or *Charity Feasts*; yet they omit the *Kiss of Peace*, so common among the *antient Churches*. For the former, they have no manner of Warrant in the Holy Scripture, either for the *Baptizing Women*, or admitting them to the *Lords Supper*, but must here fly to that Universal Tradition, which in other things they condemn for their own *Warrant* and *Excuse*.

Quest. 3. *Whether the Punishments of Hell are Equal?*

Ans. Equal as to extent, though unequal as to their degrees; their extent or duration must be equal, because all Infinite, which admits of no *magis & minus*: And Infinite they must be, because of the Infiniteness of that Sin whereof they are the Punishment; which again receives a sort of Infiniteness from that Infinite Object, namely, *God himself*, who is thereby injured and offended. Nor can we here see that ill consequence which some great Men have fixed on this notion, namely, that it leads to *Stoicism*, and makes all Sins equal; seeing we can still find a sufficient difference both in Sin and Punishment. For as some Sins are in their own nature, though not with respect to the Object, more great and hainous than others; so there may be a more Intense Degree of Pain provided for them; we being assured by our Saviour himself, that in the *Day of Judgment* 'twill be more tolerable for some Sinners than for others.

Quest. 4. *Whether there be such a Spider as a Tarantula; and whether its Bite is curable by Musick, as is commonly reported?*

Ans. The Learned *Kircherius* hath positively averred its existence in *Calabria*, and hath set down those *Measures* and *Tunes* which are solemnly used for it; some affirm further, and say there are Notes in Musick at which the *Tarantula* it self will Dance: So that as to the general Report, we cannot think it at all questionable.